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Aging in Place

By George Beanblossom
 Executive Director

Aging is a fact of life that can eventually take away some of our independence. It is ironic that for many of our participants who have (worked so hard to gain) independence in their lives now find themselves increasingly confused and needing more help than ever. For them the aging processes happen sooner rather than later.

People with Down syndrome may develop dementia as early as their 40s or 50s. It is important these individuals move into a structured living situation before being in the later stages of dementia. This helps individuals become accustomed to their surroundings while they can remember where things are before the later stages when they cannot. This is called "aging in place."

We have had to come to grips with this inevitability. Many of the people we started with in our boarding home, Cascade Christian Home, moved into their own apartments and have lived quite independently for more than 20 years.

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A Conglomeration of Wonderful Personalities

By Janne Sleeper

Cascade Supported Living's newest 24-hour dwelling was born out of necessity last fall but has become a lively hub, a conglomeration of wonderful personalities, and party central for CSL folks.

When faced with the possible addition of a young woman to the program, CSL program director, Mary Nestle-Klyn had to do some quick thinking. She had been searching for a home that met certain specifications – a fenced yard, several bedrooms, easy access and good light – and one day was surprised to see a rental that met all of the program's needs.

In addition to being the perfect house (two bathrooms, one with a walk-in shower, large garage and



big common area) the landlord was very kind and willing to work with our population as well as the ordeal of HUD inspections and paperwork.

However it had been vacant for some time and the landlord needed to rent it immediately, but the addition of the newest client was still uncertain. Board president Rhonda Howard encouraged Mary to take *(continued on page 2)*



Cascade Christian Services rang in the Christmas Holiday with a party that included clients, friends, family and staff. More than 300 people attended the party that included karaoke, a visit from Santa, special gifts and a crafts table.

Unfortunately, we are now seeing the degenerative changes that come with Alzheimer's disease.

In 2011 we were sad to lose one of our original residents because his rapid decline progressed faster than staff could be trained or facilities designed to meet his needs. For some of us, having worked with him for many years and developing a close relationship, it was painful to see him go elsewhere. We determined that we needed to get to the place where the agency would offer services for aging in place

rather than have clients moving away to another service provider.

Our response to this need was to restructure. First, our supported living program has clustered living arrangements with a staff office in one of the bedrooms of a client apartment at the Second Street apartments. At the newly created Main Street house, there is also an office in the garage. Finally, there is the King Tut Road duplex next to the Cascade Christian Home.

Secondly, we have staffed these clusters with 24-hour staff, which ensures a structured, safe environment. We are able to

do this by sharing "hours" with several residents. This allows people to continue independent living integrated within their community much longer. Our employees are also being trained at the Cascade Training Center how to handle issues of aging specific to Alzheimer's and dementia.

We are helping our aging clients to continue living safely in their community, and are assuring they are able to give their unique perspectives and journeys as lessons to those of us fortunate to know them.

and posted them at her home. She was excited and thrilled to move her furniture and writing desk to the new house.

And on Dec. 1, we moved our final client,

Mark, who needed the support of more staff and people. He had lived very independently for many years, but was looking for more company and the interaction that full-time staff and roommates provide.

As the new house has become a home, the three roommates have found common interests. They often take car rides, walks in parks and the mall and some fun shopping adventures together.

This lively bunch has planned a series of parties, from a housewarming Halloween gathering to birthday and holiday

parties with all CSL clients and staff invited. Main Street House has an open and welcoming living room and big kitchen, making it easy for more than a dozen to gather, do crafts, play games or watch movies.

"It's a huge blessing to the clients who live there," Mary says now. "I had some sleepless nights trying to make this all work, but I trusted the Lord. It's amazing how He swoops in at the last minute and takes care of all the details, right when I was the most worried."



the necessary steps. "Sometimes you have to take risks," she said. "If we lose the deposit, it is OK. At least we tried."

It was a tense wait, but Sept. 4, all the lights turned green. Nichole was moved immediately. As she loves to spend time in the sun, she brought with her elaborate play equipment and lawn furniture that found a home in the spacious back yard. By Oct. 1, another longtime CSL client, Becky, moved in. Becky had been talking about wanting to move from her apartment to a house for months. She had drawn pictures

List of Needs

Agency Contact Info: George – 360-714-9355

- 1) Looking for people to help with plan and participate in group activities for clients or for helping plan/raise funds for the agency.
- 2) Looking for people to be on our Board of Directors.

Cascade Christian Home- Lynden

Contact Info: Adriane or Emily – 360-398-2052

- 1) Paint their fence.
- 2) Do crafting with clients.
- 3) Play music for clients – they love music.
- 4) Develop relationship with clients – do activities with them.

Cascade Supported Living – Lynden

Contact Info: Mary, Janne or Tamlyn -360-318-8070

- 1) Mow lawn once a week and to do yard work at the Main Street house.
- 2) Develop relationship with clients – do activities with them.

Crestview Home – Mt. Vernon

Contact Info: Leah or Kristy -360-424-5582

- 1) Mow lawn.
- 2) Sand and stain door frames.
- 3) Paint inside house.
- 4) Do crafting with clients.
- 5) Play music for clients – they love music.
- 6) Develop relationship with clients – do activities with them.

Cascade Christian Services



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